

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

JCE ENGLISH

2022



INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to give an overview of all the open response components of the English Language syllabus code 12. The report mainly focuses on assessing and analyzing individual questions in relation to candidates' responses.

Component 2 (12/2)

General comments

This paper is a continuous writing paper that consists of two questions, Question 1 was a descriptive/narrative composition and question 2 was a newspaper report. Both questions required candidates to write in continuous writing. The questions proved to be accessible to all candidates and they responded positively to both questions 1 and 2 though limited in the vocabulary used. Candidates scored fairly well. Just like the previous cohort, the 2022 cohort was able to present facts in their compositions and were able to bring out the correct style, presentation and format of the tasks.

Comments on Individual Questions

Question 1

Candidates were able to state the occasion where they had their favorite meal. For example, they stated events, happenings and gatherings. Almost all candidates stated when the occasion was, mentioning date, time and or season. They were able to state the meal they had as their favorite e.g., macaroni cheese, chicken, etc and also stated why it was their favorite. Most stated that the meal was their favorite because the person who used to prepare that meal was no more. Some candidates were able to use the appropriate register,

Question 2

Candidates answered the questions fairly well and there was evidence that they had the knowledge of report writing. They scored fairly well in the layout,

Some candidates did not understand the question as they could not indicate that they were writing a newspaper report. Most of them, however, indicated that they were passing the science laboratory when they heard an explosion. They were limited in explaining the events that followed until the fire was eventually put out. There were few successful responses on what really was the cause of the smoke, explosion and fire.



Candidates for SPED who requested a scribe.

The following improvements were observed:

- Improvement in the spelling of words was observed (mechanics)
- Improvement in the organization was also observed.
- Legible handwriting was observed.
- Most of these candidates performed at an average.

Candidates with extended time

The following observations were made.

- Few mistakes noted under communication, grammar, mechanics and organization.
- Candidates had ample time to proof their work and they also dealt with all bullet points for both questions, hence scoring better marks.

Recommendations

- More practice in report writing
- Spelling games and exercises are recommended.
- Students to be exposed to extensive reading to enhance reactivity
- Encourage wider reading of newspapers and fiction
- Grammar exercises to be intensified to improve the use of verb tenses
- Students need to be taught differences between letter writing and report writing.



Component 3 (12/3)

General comments

This is a literature paper that contains two sections; Section A is poetry and section B is a short story. The short story has both structured and essay questions. The paper assesses level of understanding, analysis and evaluation of literary texts. Both the cohorts were able to follow the story line for both the poem and the short story. The demand of the papers was also the same. In 2021, the poem was about Refugee Life while in 2022, the poem is about The Prisoner. The two poems were metaphorically presented.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A: POETRY

In this section, an unseen poem of approximately five to six stanzas is set for candidate to analyze by responding to structured items. These are items based on the interpretation of aspects of the poem, drawing on literary skills, experiences and demonstrating personal responses. Candidates are expected to answer all questions. The section is worth 15 marks.

The poem: **PRISONER** by Tatamkhulu Africa talks about a prisoner who has spent the better part of his life in and out of prison. In this poem, the prisoner talks about how badly the people around him view him. He says that people believe that he is unpredictable, evil and untrustworthy. The prisoner realizes that even his friends have given up on him, they have stopped attending his court hearings. The poem also explains that the purpose of prisons is to mould, correct or rehabilitate people to help them have behaviors that are socially acceptable so that they do not become social misfits. For the most part, the poem is metaphorically presented; especially stanza 3 which describes the behaviors of prisoners in terms of the environment or facility itself. The stanza says “a wash basin, cracked and stained. And a little tin of scouring powder, caked as stone.” The metaphor suggests that the prisoners’ behavior is dirty/rotten and needs to be moulded/cleaned/polished.



SECTION B: THE SHORT STORY

This section is divided into two parts. In the first part, either an unseen short story or drama extract is presented for candidates to apply their knowledge and understanding of literary aspects. The extract is usually about 1000 words. Candidates are required to respond to structured items based on the development of the plot, characterization, setting, theme and the author's style. Whereas, in the second part, the candidates are expected to answer a separate task, requiring them to analyze the situation presented in the same stimuli. In this part of the question, candidates draw on their literary skills. This section is worth 30 marks. This year, it was a short story.

AJAIYI AND THE WITCH DOCTOR by Amos Tutuola talks about a young man who is born to a very poor man who is also old and sickly (weary). The young man is determined to improve his situation. He goes from one wealthy pawnbroker to another in search of money for dowry, for his father's burial and for a sacrifice of rams that a witch doctor requires of him. He has no inheritance to back him up and also has an overbearing wife who drives him deep into debt. His urge to eradicate poverty from his life exasperates his challenges and drives him deep into debt. The fake witch doctor takes advantage of his desperation and lies to him that he can help him end poverty. The witch doctor instructs him to buy nine rams and put each in a sack, then place them on the dead father's grave, making Ajaiyi believe that should he come back the next morning to find only the empty sacks, then that would be an indication that the dead father has accepted the sacrifice and soon the empty sacks would be filled with money. That done, Ajaiyi waits for the money until he gives up and so he plans on finding out what could be happening since he believes that his father had accepted his sacrifice of six rams.

THE ANALYSIS

Question 1- poem

- a) This was a recall question that required candidates to write down **two** words that have the same **vowel** sound. Most candidates got it correct. The expected response was arm/harm// shoot/fool.
- b) In this question, candidates were expected to analyse the actions of the court orderly in the way they hold tightly to the prisoner's arm (The court orderly's hand falls heavily on my arm). The possible responses were;
 - i) **Untrustworthy (the prisoner cannot be trusted)** - the orderly thinks that the prisoner may run down the corridor and escape, or jump on an



unsuspecting magistrate or even shoot someone looking at him. (Stanza 1 line 5, 6 and 7).

ii) **Monstrous/murderer/evil** - the orderly thinks that the prisoner is so heartless and inconsiderate that he would commit murder in full view of people in the courtroom. For example, leap on an unsuspecting magistrate/shoot some fool staring at me. (Stanza 1: lines 6 and 7).
Most candidates were able to score both the traits and the examples.

c) The question required candidates to pick a word (Quote) **from a line** but most candidates picked two or more lines making their responses wrong regardless of the fact that amongst those lines, the correct line had been picked. The correct response was “The bearers of my guilt.” Some candidates wrote “So pitifully few! The bearers of my guilt of my guilt” which is wrong.

d) (i) The question required that the candidates **state** the poetic device NOT to explain the stanza as some of the candidates did. The possible response was /simile/ since the wash basin is said to be so dirty that it resembles a stone.

(ii) In this question the candidates were required to give how the description of the cell equates to the behavior of the prisoner. In other words, the cell is very dirty and its wash basin is broken, it is just like the rotten/dirty/tainted/corroded behaviors of criminals. Reasons could be; because they have committed criminal offenses/prisoners have unacceptable behaviors that make them societal misfits. Most candidates were not able to describe the behavior instead they gave an explanation, and that did not score.

(ii) The candidates were supposed to highlight why prisons exist/why do countries build prisons/what is the use of having a prison. This is a knowledge-based question that every candidate could have scored but some of them got it wrong. The expected response was that prisons are there for rehabilitation/correction/moulding. The justification is “they show me to a wash-basin/ and a little tin of scouring powder.

e) Words have an impression on emotions according to the way they have been chosen and arranged (diction). For instance, the word “darkness” may suggest “death”, “loss” or “depression.” So, in this poem, the last stanza is a depressing moment in which the prisoner is overwhelmed with



pain/hurt/loneliness/hopefulness because he realizes that his deeds have separated him from other people (especially his friends whose numbers are dwindling). The prisoner realizes that his criminal acts have made him worthless. But most candidates could not deduce the meaning of the words used in the stanza, hence getting the question wrong.

- f) This is a recall question in which candidates were supposed to remember types of poems and how to identify and differentiate them. The possible response was **Lament**. In this question, the candidates were **NOT** to define what lament is but to write the feelings of the prisoner that qualifies the poem to be a sad one. The possible explanation was **the prisoner is in pain and that his deeds have made him a misfit in society**.

QUESTION 2- Short Story

- a) The candidates were expected to know the meaning of the word “deceptive” for them to explain in what way the witch doctor is deceptive. Deceptive could mean lying/cheating/tricking. The possible response is that the witch doctor tricked Ajaiyi into believing that his dead father would come from the grave to take the rams and in return make Ajaiyi rich. The example would be that in truth it is the witch doctor with his servants who would always come to the grave to carry away the sacks of the rams. The response could only score if the deception part comes out clearly in the answer otherwise the whole answer was marked down.
- b) This question required **two** conditions and support. Most candidates bulleted their responses such that they would write “old and weary” in the first bullet and then look for something else to write as a second condition. This meant that the candidate would score only two marks, **one** for one condition and **one** for justification (self-penalization). Candidates should be advised to avoid bulleting at all costs, they should write in continuous form. The possible response was, He was **old** and **weary** (two marks). His son took over the farming/he could not pay dowry for his son to help him marry (justification).
- c) This is a question on plot, and sequence of events (what are the four main events that made Ajaiyi threaten to kill the witch doctor and his servants, arrange the answers according to how the events happened). The



candidates retold the story instead of picking the main events from the incident. The possible responses were;

- i) The witch doctor deceived him into bringing a sacrifice of nine rams even though he knew that Ajaiyi was poor.
 - ii) The witch doctor demanded the remaining three (3) rams which forced Ajaiyi to decide to go and have a discussion with his dead father who did not leave any inheritance for him when he died.
 - iii) Ajaiyi's was unable to work on his farm so that he can pay back the third pawn-broker who helped him with money to buy the six(6) rams (sacrifice) that have actually been eaten by the witch doctor and his servants.
 - iv) Ajaiyi's poverty remained unsolved; he was deep into debt and is not even able to work on his own farm since his time is overstretched.
- d) The candidates were to unpack the uttering, to say what Ajaiyi means when he angrily utters it; "Am I not suffering from your poverty?" The candidates needed to know at what point in the story Ajaiyi said it and what made him say it. This is an utterance that Ajaiyi said after realizing that there was no money coming from his dead father and the sacks and there was still a demand to complete the sacrifice by bringing the remaining three rams. He angrily asked his dead father if there is any inheritance that he left for him so that he could demand a sacrifice in exchange for wealth. The possible response is that **Ajaiyi inherited** poverty from his father who never left anything when he died. The evidence is: did you leave anything to bury you with/my son; it is a pity I can't pay for your dowry because I am very poor. Most candidates were able to score 2 marks in this question.
- e) The moral of the story is determined by the actions of the main character, especially **how the character responds to situations**. The moral of the story is the main focus of the story, not just an isolated incident in the story, which is how most candidates describe it, hence getting it wrong. The possible response was that challenges are temporary and that they need someone who is focused and persistent in seeking solutions or that trial and error solves challenges as we see with Ajaiyi who never gives up but instead tries all the ideas that could possibly solve his poverty and finally his wins



as he grabs all the six hundred pounds that the witch doctor has been keeping in his pot.

QUESTION 3

This is an essay question, **it is strictly written in continuous form, like a composition.** The question is in four (4) parts.

- i) Ajaiyi’s character traits
- ii) The explanation (**NOT DEFINITION**) of the trait according to the story.
- iii) Challenges faced by Ajaiyi _
- v) Solutions to those challenges.

For example paragraph 1:

Ajaiyi is naïve. Throughout the story, Ajaiyi blindly/foolishly trusts everything that the witch doctor tells him, he even goes to tell the witch doctor that he has brought the rams. He does that until he stumbles on a strategy that pays off. Ajaiyi’s challenge is that he is so poor that he cannot even feed his family. He, therefore, wants his poverty to end, so he goes to consult with a witch doctor that puts him into deep debt as he demands a sacrifice that he claims would be given to the dead father in return for wealth. As the debts overwhelm him, Ajaiyi decides to face his dead father to find out why he has not yet gotten the money despite his sacrifice. He, therefore, gets into one of the sacks and sits next to two other sacks he has filled up with soil. In the end, he finds out that it is actually the witch doctor and his servants that have been collecting and eating the rams he has been placing on the grave. Ajaiyi then threatens to kill the witch doctor and takes away the witch doctor’s six hundred pounds which is enough to pay off all of Ajaiyi’s debts and he lives happily ever after.

The tabulated information below further answers the question but needs to be written out in continuous form:

Character trait	Explanation	Challenge	Solution
Optimistic	He keeps on getting himself into debt by pawning himself with the hope that he will finally	-he has no money for dowry -he does not have money to bury his father	-he pawns himself to three pawnbrokers to get money that would help him



	find a solution and will be able to pay everyone off.	-he does not have money to buy the sacrifice items. (mark only one of them)	solve his challenges. -he finds out that the witch doctor has been eating the rams and makes him pay by collecting all his money to pay off his debts and live comfortably.
Daring/risk taker/bold/brave/strong	He owes three pawnbrokers without fear that he may not be able to pay them back. He would do anything to make sure that his condition is attended to	-he needs money for a dowry -he needs money to bury his father -he needs money to buy sacrifice items (mark only one of them)	Finally, one of his strategies pays off as he finds out that the witch doctor has been lying to him all along. He takes the witch doctor's money, pays off all his debts and lives happily ever after with the balance.
Accommodating	He takes his wife's suggestions of how to find solutions to their situation	He wants his poverty to end but he does not know what idea would work for him	He ends up taking the witch doctor's money, pays off his debts and finally lives comfortably with his wife
Compassionate/understanding/loving and caring	He feels pity for his father who is not able to help	He wants to marry but he does not have	He pawns himself to get money to marry



	him pay a dowry because he is poor	money to pay a dowry	
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Unfortunately, some candidates wrote on traits that are synonymous, hence scored only for one of them for instance, brave and courageous & stupid and foolish are the same.

SPED SECTION

There was a misinterpretation of question 3, the essay question. The original question is to discuss any three of **Ajaiyi's character traits** in relation to the challenges he faces in the story and how he resolves them.

For SPED it was misinterpreted into discussing any three of **Ajaiyi's values** in relation to the problems he had in the story and how he solved them.

NB: traits refer to behaviours that someone displays in reaction to situations e.g. heartless/brave/hardworking etc. while values refer to the usefulness of something or a society's beliefs about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours e.g. Freedom/wealth/marriage etc. Hence the question required that the candidates write the different reactions to the situation at hand.

REMEMBER, a word has different meanings depending on the context.



Component 4 (12/4)

General comments

This is a Listening and summary question paper that comprises two sections. Section A is listening comprehension which is read to the candidates in seven minutes. Section A contains structured questions which carry 20 marks. Section B is a written passage from which the candidates attempt the task asked from the passage. This section carries 10 marks divided as follows: 5 marks for the points identified and another 5 for style (cohesion, punctuation, grammar and spelling)

Both the 2021 and 2022 papers assessed listening and summary skills. In 2021 the passage was about Tswana Dog while the 2022 paper was about Crocodile Meat. The 2021 topic was of interest to the candidates and quite familiar. In 2022, the topic was also of interest and motivated the candidates to listen attentively. Both cohorts were able to understand the passage and therefore they could easily recall answers from the listening passage.

Comments on Individual Questions

SECTION A: Listening Comprehension (Crocodile Meat)

The passage was about crocodile meat and it was very interesting therefore motivating the candidates to listen attentively since crocodile farming is not common in most parts of the country (Botswana). Most of the questions were simple recall questions hence the paper was accessible to the majority of the candidates.

Comments on individual questions

1a. This item required candidates to state two characteristics of a crocodile. It was a simple recall question in which the majority of the candidates scored two marks.

Question (b) also required the candidates to lift from the passage. Most candidates across all levels of ability managed to get a score.

Question (c) required candidates to give an assurance Douma gave to visitors. Above-average and average candidates scored while below-average performers struggled to score a mark.

Question (d) demanded from the candidates the number of crocodiles on the farm. It was a simple lift question and the majority scored on this one.

Question (e) required candidates to state the health benefit crocodile meat has over chicken. Below-average performers found the question a bit challenging hence they did not score.



Question (f) required candidates to give two ways in which crocodile meat was prepared. The majority of the candidates across all levels of ability scored two marks

Question (g) required candidates to state the reason why crocodile meat was not sold in butcheries. Above-average and average performers scored easily while below-average performers struggled to score

Question (h) was moderately accessible and the majority of the candidates across all levels of ability managed to get it correct.